

Onion Peak Trip

March 7, 1948

At 7:00 a.m. six ambitious hikers, three Club members; Axel Ramvick, Hector Wilson and I and three guests; Dick Fisher, George Morkel, Don Britton assembled at Horton's residence, a slight deviation from the schedule.

We set out in two cars, Horton's and Fisher's, stopping beyond Warrenton for Harold Tobin and Chas. Johnson, official leader of the expedition. The next stop was at Keck's Service Station in Seaside where Charlie obtained the key for the gate on the logging road which was to lead us into the Onion Peak country.

Though the sky was overcast the weather appeared very promising as we left Astoria, the sun was breaking through in the east, and we had hopes that the sky would clear as the day went by.

The key fit the lock on the gate and we entered the logging road leading up the west side of the Necanicum river from the so called Black Bridge. About three miles up, the main road forks, the right hand road leading to Sugarloaf Mountain and the left hand road which we took, leading to the east of Sugarloaf and terminating about one and a half miles nearly due south of the summit, and about six miles from the Necanicum Hiway.

We stopped at a point on a ridge about a quarter mile from the end of the road, elevation about 2000 feet and a good view point. A large portion of the Nehalem valley and much mountainous country to the south could be seen. An occasional glimpse of the summit of Sugarloaf could be had through the lowering clouds which left the trees coated with ice.

This vantage point on the road was reached in time to see the summit of Onion Peak, our objective and note its actual direction, but it was soon obscured and we saw it no more. What we observed in the direction of the peak was to me much more discouraging than I had anticipated; Grassy Creek canyon nearly 1000 feet deep strewn with logging debris, impassible looking rock cliffs, besides several miles distance, and questionable weather conditions.

After study of the army map and visible portion of the country a route was decided on that took us through the upper end of Grassy Creek Canyon to foot of the rock cliffs on the far side where we would strike an old railroad grade leading to the south and around the impassible looking district.

A short distance down in the canyon a couple deer were seen. After about a mile of climbing over, under and around logging debris with a band of 15 or 20 nice fat elk some distance ahead the old railroad grade was more than welcome and we stayed with it much farther than we had expected, perhaps a mile and a half. Near the end of the grade another study of the map and visible country was made after which we ascended the steep but open side of a ridge which appeared to be a good approach to the peak. On the top of this ridge we entered the timbered area and our trail was blazed so there would be no question about returning to the proper place. The going was good here but the atmosphere and brush was getting wetter and wetter and there was enough snow on the ground to leave a trail. After a half hour or more of trail blazing it was agreed that we should stop for lunch as it was past noon and also that it would not be advisable to attempt to reach the summit, tho we did climb to the top of a high rocky point which was near. Charlie did a little scouting for

familiar land marks but soon joined the rest of us on the rocky point for lunch.

While we were eating, the fog cleared enough for us to see the ocean to the northwest and also southwest of us, also the sheer rock cliffs on the side of Onion Peak but not the summit, which was still about a half mile distant. Lunches finished, an attempt was made at least to photograph the group on the top of the rock pinnacle which was too small for the group and camera at the same time.

The descent to the railroad grade was made much faster and easier than had been the ascent largely due to the discovery of a fair trail through the logged area and probably used by early loggers. On reaching the railroad grade, we stopped for a short rest and had the greatest surprise imaginable. Hector drew a nice fat apple pie from his pack and divided it among the group. The first pie I have seen on a hiking trip. I hope it's not the last. The remainder of the return trip was uneventful tho the climb from the canyon back to the logging road was time and energy consuming, and the sight of the cars was welcomed by all.

On the homeward trip time was taken to drive up the Tillamook head road from Seaside to investigate the alternate trip made by the less ambitious branch of the Club. Only one car was found. The majority of our group had enough exercise for the day so we gave up the idea of the ranch visit and proceeded toward home.

Tho our objective was not reached, some valuable information was obtained for a possible near future trip, which will no doubt see the same gang on hand; Dick Fisher, Harold Tobin, ^{Ed}~~George~~ Morkel, Don Britton, Axel Ramvick, Hector Wilson, Charlie Johnson and the trip historian, Ralph Horton.

